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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Douglas S. Matsunaga
Application No.: 10/602,443
Filed: 06/24/2003
Title: VARIABLE STRIP TENSIONER
Group/Art Unit: 3654
Examiner: Rivera, William Arauz
Attorney Docket No.: 144-039 Braner

Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment
Honorable Commissioner of Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action of September 29, 2004, please amend the claims as indicated by the accompanying claim amendment sheet.

RESPONSE

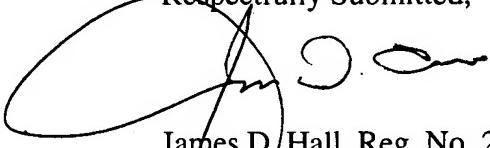
In response to the objection by the examiner to the drawings, replacement drawing sheets for Figures 1 and 2 have been submitted. In Figures 1 and 2, the slitter line 10 is now appropriately identified.

Objected to claim 4 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 1, 2 and 3. Thus, it is believed that claim 4 as presently amended and depending claim 5 are in allowable form. The conditional allowance of these claims is noted with appreciation.

Claims 1-3 and 6-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gaudin in view of Carstens. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested in the light of the amendment to claims 1, 6 and 9. In claims 1, 6 and 9, each of the individual segments are described as being secured against movement along the pass line of the slitter. As such, the individual segments are fixed in position relative to horizontal movement but are moveable in a vertical orientation. This construction is not disclosed in the Gaudin reference. In Gaudin, webs 11' each rotate along the pass line in conjunction with movement of the strip of slit material. In fact, the entire principle of the Gaudin reference is to provide tensioning without friction as indicated in column 2 at lines 28-33. As such, the mode of operation of Gaudin differs substantially from that of the applicant. In the Carstens reference, the purpose is not to control individual strips of slit material, but rather a single sheet 3, which extends uniformly across each of the individual friction elements 47. As such, the purpose in Carstens differs entirely from the purpose of the device in the Gaudin reference. Additionally, Gaudin utilizes a friction plate 16, which would affect the ability to

individually vary the pressure upon strips 8 by webs 11'. As such, there would appear to be little need or desire to incorporate the individual controls shown in Carstens. The wear place 16 in Gaudin along with inflatable chamber 14 are matched for performance. No separate controls appear to be contemplated in Gaudin. Accordingly, it is believed that independent claims 1, 6 and 9 along with their respective dependent claims are in allowable form and are not rendered obvious over Gaudin in view of Carstens.

Respectfully Submitted,

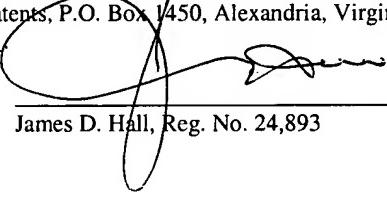


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28 Dec. 04



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